MICHAEL PUPIN

1858–1935

THE recent death of the great scientist Michael Pupin once more reminds the social workers of this country who have been staunch supporters of a liberal immigration policy of the great contribution which was made to the development of this country by the hordes of poor and almost destitute immigrants who came here to share in the "promise of American life." Michael Pupin belongs to the great period when protection of the "right of asylum" was a national ideal and a national tradition and "free immigration" was still America's policy. Landing a penniless boy at Castle Garden, he became one of the world's greatest scientists. While professor of electro-mechanics at Columbia University he wrote his well-known work *From Immigrant to Inventor*, and the social workers who stood firmly for the rights of the immigrants read with appreciation and new hope the beautifully written chapters in which he told of the poverty-stricken home in which he was reared. He described the simple village life in the Serbian village on the old Austrian frontier. These Serbian peasants were illiterate, but they had character, which is more important than education; and as they handed down the stories of their great Serb heroes in the village gatherings in the evening twilight, they developed the traditions of courage, generosity, honesty, and self-sacrifice among their children.

The Episcopalian Bishop of New York, speaking at the services in memory of Professor Pupin said, very appropriately, "The great things which he accomplished and the honors which deservedly came to him in the New World never made him unmindful of his friends in the Old World or forgetful of those among whom he lived as a shepherd boy on the plains of Serbia; and he proved his loyalty by acts of sacrifice and devotion which few have equaled."